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ECS Analysis: Most states increasing investment in pre-K programs for 2013-14 as funding tops pre-recession levels

DENVER – Thirty states and the District of Columbia increased appropriations for state-funded preschool programs for 2013-14, marking a second straight year of additional pre-K investments.

An analysis of 2013-14 preschool allocations by the 50 states and the District of Columbia shows state funding grew by \$363.6 million, for a total of \$5.6 billion. This is a 6.9% increase over fiscal year 2012-13.

Bruce Atchison, director of the Early Learning Institute at the Education Commission of the States, said some states are replacing dollars cut during the recent recession. But he said most states have surpassed their 2008-09 preschool funding levels.

“Our analysis shows total investment by the states in pre-K programs is now \$400 million more than it was before the recession,” Atchison said.

Among some of the findings in the report, [available here](#):

- Mississippi made a \$3 million first-time investment in pre-K. This means 40 states and D.C. now fund preschool programs serving primarily 4-year-olds.
- Thirty states increased funding – 10 states by more than 20% – while three states decreased funding and funding in seven states was flat.
- The 2013-14 growth in preschool appropriations builds on a 3.6% funding increase from the previous year.

Atchison noted bipartisan support for the boost in preschool funding. The states with the largest increases are Massachusetts, which nearly doubled its investment, and South Carolina, which increased funding by 80%.

“With continued economic constraints on state budgets, policymakers in a majority of states are investing in early education and rallying around the research that highlights the important return on investment,” said ECS President Jeremy Anderson.

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